

Topics

First half on national institutions and policies; second half on international relations, conflict, international organizations, geopolitics and geoeconomics.

1. In first part

- (a) **Voters** and their participation – how preferences, beliefs, trust, have evolved in Europe and US.
- (b) **Parties and electoral systems** – theory and evolution in Europe. Cambridge University Press forthcoming book on “The Financial Drivers of Populism in Europe” is basis for these first two classes.
- (c) **Law-making and bureaucracies** – mainly “From Weber to Kafka” AER 2021, “More Laws More Growth” JPE 2025, paper on JLEO with Dana Foarta, most recent working papers on rule making in the US and economic cost of ambiguous laws in Italy, posturing and position taking in the US, optimal checks and balances etc. At least two classes on this material.
- (d) **Electoral systems and immigration policies** and related papers on variation of probability of success of populist exclusionary agendas, and dynamic consequences on sustainability, cycles, verification and falsification, cycles of plausibility of narratives.

2. Second part on international relations and geoeconomics, conflict and power:

- (a) **Realism vs liberal theories** of international relations with summary description in JEL short article; related QJE paper with Caselli and Rohner 2015.
- (b) **Rationalist explanations of war** “Political bias and war” paper and survey articles;
- (c) **The role of resources**: handbook chapter and pipeline work.
- (d) **Mediation and third party intervention models**.
- (e) **International organizations** with main focus on efficacy, and general geopolitical considerations and future research;
- (f) **Consequences of populist order for conflict and inequality** across countries and within countries.

3. These are roughly 11 classes, while the last one will be devoted to the presentation of the students’ research proposals. The requirement in fact is the development of a research design and related conjectures or hypotheses, theoretical or empirical. The judgement will be on the basis of how interesting and doable the research question is.

References

1. On populism:

- (a) “The Shift to Commitment Politics and Populism: Theory and Evidence from the U.S.” (with Luca Bellodi, Antonio Nicolò and Paolo Roberti); IGIER WP no. 714;
- (b) Guiso, Luigi, Massimo Morelli, Tommaso Sonno and Helios Herrera (forthcoming): *The Financial Drivers of Populism in Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Elements in European Politics, open access;
- (c) Anelli, Massimo, Massimo Morelli and Marvin Pappalettera (2026): “Railroads and the Silver Shoes of Populism: The Rise and Fall of the People’s Party in 19th-Century America.”
- (d) Gennaro, Gloria, Giampaolo Lecce and Massimo Morelli (2024). “Intertemporal Evidence on the Strategy of Populism in the United States,” *Electoral Studies*, Volume 92.
- (e) Bellodi, Luca, Massimo Morelli and Matia Vannoni (2023). “A Costly Commitment: Populism, Economic Performance and the Quality of Bureaucracy” *American Journal of Political Science*, **Volume 68**, 193-209, open access.
- (f) Ash, Elliott, Massimo Morelli and Richard van Weelden (2017). “Elections and Divisiveness: Theory and Evidence,” *Journal of Politics*, Vol. **79**, 4: 1268-85;
- (g) Morelli, Massimo, and Richard van Weelden (2014). “Ideology and Information in Policy making,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, **Vol. 25**(3), 412-39 – (awarded the 2015 Elinor Ostrom Prize for the best paper published in JTP during 2014);

2. On electoral systems:

- (a) Morelli, Massimo (2004). “Party Formation and Policy Outcomes under Different Electoral Systems,” *Review of Economic Studies* Vol. **71-3**, 829-53;
- (b) “Electoral Systems and Immigration Policies” (with Matteo Gamalerio and Margherita Negri), CEPR dp No. 20873;

3. on the legislative incentives and institutions and effects on the bureaucracy and economic outcomes:

- (a) Gratton, Gabriele and Massimo Morelli (2022). “Optimal Checks and Balances under Policy Uncertainty” *International Economic Review*, Vol. 63, PP. 549-69.
- (b) Gratton, Gabriele, Luigi Guiso, Claudio Michelacci and Massimo Morelli (2021). “From Weber to Kafka: Political Instability and Over-Production of Laws” *American Economic Review*, **Volume 111**(9), PP 2964-3003.
- (c) “Position Taking and the Quality of Legislation: A Text and Network Analysis for the US Congress” (with Tommaso Giommoni and Daniele Paserman), mimeo;

- (d) Ash, Elliott, Massimo Morelli and Matia Vannoni (2025). “More Laws More Growth? Evidence from U.S. States.” *Journal of Political Economy*, volume 133-7.
- (e) Foarta, Dana, and Massimo Morelli (2025): “The Common Determinants of Legislative and Regulatory Complexity.” *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization*.
- (f) “The Economic Costs of Ambiguous Laws” (with Tommaso Giommoni, Luigi Guiso and Claudio Michelacci, under review);
- (g) “Personnel is Policy: Delegation and Political Misalignment in the Rulemaking Process.” *NBER* wp no. 34932 (with Luca Bellodi, Jörg Spenkuch, Edoardo Teso, Matia Vannoni and Guo Xu, under review);

4. On conflict and international relations:

- (a) Morelli, Massimo, and Tommaso Sonno (2017). “On Economic Interdependence and War,” *Journal of Economic Literature*
- (b) Dube, Oeindrila, Massimo Morelli and Debraj Ray (2024). *Handbook of Economics of Conflict* Volume I, North Holland;
- (c) Herrera, Helios, Massimo Morelli and Salvatore Nunnari (2022). “A Theory of Power Wars” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, **Vol. 17(1)**, PP 1-30.
- (d) Meirowitz, Adam, Massimo Morelli, Kris Ramsay and Francesco Squintani (2022). “Third Party Intervention and Strategic Militarization” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, **Vol. 17(1)**, PP 31-59.
- (e) Meirowitz, Adam, Massimo Morelli, Kris Ramsay and Francesco Squintani (2019). “Dispute Resolution Institutions and Strategic Militarization” *Journal of Political Economy* **vol. 127**, issue 1, 378-418;
- (f) Esteban, Joan, Massimo Morelli and Dominic Rohner (2015). “Strategic Mass Killings,” *Journal of Political Economy*, **Vol. 123-5**, 1087-1132; International Geneva Award winner 2015;
- (g) Horner, Johannes, Massimo Morelli and Francesco Squintani (2015). “Mediation and Peace,” *Review of Economic Studies*, **Vol. 82**, 1483-501;
- (h) Caselli, Francesco, Massimo Morelli and Dominic Rohner (2015). “The Geography of Inter-State Resource Wars,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, **Vol 130-1**, pp. 267-315;
- (i) Jackson, Matthew O. and Massimo Morelli (2011). “The Reasons for War – an Updated Survey,” chapter 3 in *Handbook on the Political Economy of War*, edited by Chris Coyne, Elgar Publishing;
- (j) Jackson, Matthew O. and Massimo Morelli (2007). “Political Bias and War,” *American Economic Review* **Vol. 97-4**, 1353-73;
- (k) Jackson, Matthew O. and Massimo Morelli (2009). “Strategic Militarization, Deterrence and Wars,” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, **Vol. 4-4**, 279-313;

- (1) Maggi, Giovanni, and Massimo Morelli (2006). “Self-Enforcing Voting in International Organizations,” *American Economic Review*, Vol. **96-4**, 1137-58;